rising edge being behind and nearest to said phase of said predetermined rising edge of said output second periodic signal, wherein the adjusting of said delay is irrespective of said comparison when starting the step of adjusting of said delay.

4. (Thrice Amended) A delay time adjusting method of adjusting a delay time of an input first periodic signal so that a phase of said input first periodic signal and a phase of an output second periodic signal match each other based on a comparison between phases of said input first periodic signal and said input second periodic signal, the method comprising:

a first step of judging whether a phase of a predetermined rising edge of said output second periodic signal is behind a phase of a first rising edge of said input first periodic signal; and

a second step of increasing the delay time to adjust said phase of said output second periodic signal so that, when said phase of said predetermined rising edge is judged to be behind said phase of said first rising edge in said first step, said phase of said predetermined rising edge and a phase of a second rising edge of said input first periodic signal match each other, the second rising edge being one period behind said first rising edge, wherein the steps of judging and delaying are irrespective of said comparison when starting the delay time adjustment.

6. (Thrice Amended) A delay time adjusting circuit for adjusting a delay time of an input first periodic signal so that a phase of said input first periodic signal and a phase of an output second periodic signal match each other based on a comparison between phases of said input first periodic signal and said input second periodic signal, the circuit comprising:

judging means for judging whether a phase of a predetermined rising edge of said output second periodic signal is behind a phase of a predetermined rising edge of said input first periodic signal; and

delaying means for adjusting said delay time so that, when said phase of said predetermined rising edge of said output second periodic signal is judged to be behind said phase of said predetermined rising edge of said input first periodic signal by said judging means, said predetermined rising edge of said output second periodic signal matches a rising edge of said input first periodic signal, a phase of the rising edge being behind and nearest to said phase of said predetermined rising edge of said output second periodic signal, wherein the steps of judging and delaying are irrespective of said comparison when starting the delay time adjustment.

7. (Thrice Amended) A delay time adjusting circuit for adjusting a delay time of an input first periodic signal so that a phase of said input first periodic signal and a phase of an output second periodic signal match each other based on a comparison between phases of said input first periodic signal and said input second periodic signal, the circuit comprising:

delaying means for delaying said input first periodic signal so as to generate said output second periodic signal;

phase-detecting means for detecting whether a phase of a predetermined rising edge of said output second periodic signal is behind a phase of a first rising edge of said input first periodic signal; and

adjusting means for controlling said delaying means so that, when said phase of said predetermined rising edge is judged to be behind said phase of said first rising

edge by said phase-detecting means, said delaying means delays said phase of said output second periodic signal until said phase of said predetermined rising edge and a phase of a second rising edge of said input first periodic signal match each other, the second rising edge being one period behind said first rising edge, wherein the steps of delaying, phase-detecting and adjusting are irrespective of the comparison when starting the delay adjustment.

A copy of the marked up amended claims is attached to this response showing the changes as set forth in 37 C.F.R. § 1.121.